

Section Six

Second Chances at Literacy: Serving Low-Literate Adults

Literacy Notes for Librarians Serving Low-literate Adults

Adult low-literacy is the thorniest of the literacy problems. In spite of nearly universal schooling, insufficient literacy skills affect between a fifth and a fourth of adults in Missouri. Absolute illiteracy is now rather unusual, at least among non-disabled native speakers of English. However, low literacy, that is, having some literacy skill but not enough to succeed in this society at this time, is distressingly common. The literacy demands of daily life in the United States continue to rise as the information age progresses, as technology becomes mandatory, and as jobs without literacy demands have become obsolete or moved overseas.

Adults are not children. That seems obvious. But for decades educators generalized from K-12 education when they taught adults. Increasingly, educational philosophy recognizes that a re-run of K-12 instruction is not the most effective way to teach low-literate adults. Studies of the reading process in adults are now in progress. One firm finding emerging from both studies and experience is that the differences in the life situations of adult learners and child learners are crucial. A second strong finding is the adults' need for literacy improvement in context and connection with the lives they are living. Adults filter literacy learning through much experience and many time constraints. While the emerging principles concerning instructional techniques may not apply to library efforts, many affirm what libraries have been doing in adult programming for some time. The "whole life" approach and accessibility of libraries fit well with the needs of adults who are trying to improve their literacy, if we can prepare ourselves to serve them and convince them to use what we offer. In an educational world where more and more depends on tests, libraries are free to simply provide accessible materials and information to meet the life needs of patrons whether or not it raises test scores. Research affirms this, too, is a literacy effort.

While libraries serving low-literate adults often reap many rewards, adult new readers and adult literacy students are admittedly not a patron group easy to serve. It certainly benefits both individuals and communities if low-literate adults are being supported as they become more literate. There are multiple ways to serve low-literate adults. Libraries can choose or create a model that works for their community.

Knowing some parameters of the problem may help libraries shape successful efforts. In adults, low literacy tends to be part of a cluster of problems. The problems that result from low literacy shape adults' lives in negative ways, while other problems restrict their literacy skill and opportunities to become literate. Statistics suggest three-fourths of the people who need literacy improvement do not enroll in adult education programs. This opens a space for library services and community efforts in which libraries might be valuable partners. Native speakers who reach adulthood without literacy skill often have learning disabilities or other problems that make reaching full literacy difficult. They often have life situations, past experiences with schooling, and long-standing habits that work against them. Partnerships with agencies provide other services are often a fruitful approach.

In addition, adult education programs are being challenged by rising numbers of teenagers in adult education classes. The reasons for this are not yet clear, but high-stakes educational testing, increasingly rigid high school programs (often in response to high-stakes testing or increased security concerns and behavior issues), recreational drug use, and a general disaffection among the teen population all seem to be involved.

There are definitely challenges. To serve low literate adults we have to draw them in and we have to help them learn the library culture. Everything we do in a library is literacy based, and despite our attempts to be user friendly, the library can be a fearsome place for the uninitiated. Although low-literate adults may not respond in great numbers, some will respond, changing both their own situations and the community around them, perhaps even breaking the cycle of low literacy for their children. In most cases lives are changed one at a time, a fact librarians who work with individual patrons have long realized. A library that can be part of the change for even a few formerly-low-literate adults does service to both individuals and the community. Such libraries also build their own support bases.

So we turn again to looking at our collections and our programming to see how we might serve low-literate adults.

Thinking about collections for low-literate adults and adult new readers

Considerable evidence shows that for adults as well as for children, reading improves with practice. Recreational reading raises reading levels and helps the mind in other ways. Other people's stories told in books enrich our souls and give us new direction, and adults who still struggle with literacy are often in need of that. Books and periodicals that low-literate adults can actually read are an important part of adult literacy efforts.

Usually books the library has specifically for low-literate adults are called "Adult New Reader Collections." Mainline publishing houses seem not to know that about a fourth of the people in the USA could use versions of books and magazines written at easier levels than what they are publishing, whether because those people have reading problems or because English is not their native language. An adult new reader collection attempts to find materials to serve that quarter of the population and assemble the materials for easy access. Most material printed especially for adult new readers comes from educational publishing houses. They often offer a few "high-low" (high interest – low reading level) books for adults alongside educational texts. These high-low materials are usually either leisure reading books written especially for adults at low reading levels, or nonfiction life skills and survival materials. A discussion of sources for adult new reader materials is contained in this handbook.

The task of finding materials for adult new readers is difficult for literacy beginners. (Publishable material using the same few hundred words over and over is understandably rare.) It is probably necessary to buy materials book by book, but even if there are only a dozen books in the new reader collection, that is more than some patrons have ever read before. This kind of collection may also be useful to young adults who struggle with reading. Literacy tutors should know

about these materials. Adding materials for low-literate adults to the collection somehow can increase the literacy focus of the library.

There are both advantages and challenges to an adult new reader collection.

Advantages of an Adult New Reader Collection	Challenges of an Adult New Reader Collection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This collection encourages adult literacy and expands the literacy support offered at the library. • Some materials will also serve low-literate teens and non-native English speakers. • The presence of the collection opens the door for cooperation with adult literacy providers and programs. • An adult new reader collection fills a need and a niche almost certainly not filled by any other organization in the area. • An adult new reader collection helps libraries serve the entire community and has the potential to expand patron bases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials that fit both library procedures and low-literate adults' needs are limited and sometimes difficult to find. (There are tips for finding them in this handbook.) • Once in the library, low-literacy materials often don't circulate or have high loss rates. • People who need material at an easy reading level may be reluctant to use it or simply not think about using it. • Materials for low-literate adults sometimes have a format awkward for library shelves, although this is changing. • The collection will not be used automatically; some marketing and encouragement will be needed.

Librarians who can't provide a consolidated new reader collection, or who want both a consolidated low-literacy section and something else, have found other ways to make adult new reader materials convenient and attractive. Some mix easy material with regular material in mini-collections or sections that contain a mixture of reading levels. Some examples: a parenting collection, a Missouri collection, an African-American collection, etc. Some libraries find easy materials circulate if they are incorporated this way, and these subject-classified sections have the advantage of serving all patrons. Another approach is to mark easy material with a small dot or star and scatter it throughout the collection so it is easy to spot. Librarians who take this approach argue that it pushes low-literate patrons to look at the entire collection and teaches them how to use the library while eliminating any negative feeling that might be attached to a "low-literacy" collection.

Audio books are another way to get around difficulties with print. If a person will read along with the audio, that activity may even improve reading ability. Both audio books and videos may bring low-literate patrons into the library building. In some cases they will move on to reading the kind of material they enjoyed in audio. Audio books are becoming a staple of the literate community, and they can offer low-literate adults a glimpse into the literate world as well

as giving them a chance to develop meaning-level experiences with text that they cannot yet decode. Audio and video materials are already part of our collections; they only have to be pointed out to this group of patrons who may not have considered using them.

Some libraries whose new reader collections don't circulate will house new reader titles at an adult education site, as a deposit collection. They then find the collection is used there. Others rotate boxes of adult new reader materials among several class or service center sites. This does not get these potential patrons into the library, but it does put manageable reading materials in the students' hands, and keep materials that don't circulate from filling shelf space.

A variant of providing books at adult-low-literacy reading levels is to put them in places where individuals who would use them spend time. Waiting rooms, Laundromats, agency offices, and food pantries might be appropriate places. (Children's books in the same places would support family literacy.)

If a library works with a GED program, the library might consider setting up an education shelf organized by the sections of the GED. Some libraries put such a grouping in the actual GED classroom as a deposit collection, whether or not the class meets in the library. Many easy reading materials would fit nicely under social studies, science, and reading. A real issue in passing those sections of the GED is having enough background knowledge to interpret passages properly. Providing juvenile or easy reader non-fiction is a way to offer people that background knowledge while they improve their reading.

Ideas for Programming

Programming may be the most successful way to start serving low-literate adults, since the collection assumes literacy independence they may not have. Much of our library programming doesn't depend on literacy, so the literacy level of those who participate is not an issue, but it brings adults into contact with the literate world as well as the library. If we can invite low-literate adults into our space and make them comfortable there, they may become library users as well as program attendees. Libraries are a wonderful place to help adults discover a more literate world. This benefits them and it is the best thing we can do for their children.

Almost no adult who enters the world of literacy belatedly enters it alone. Almost all have a tutor, a class, or a teacher who is involved. Active library programming for newly-literate or low-literate adults will usually begin as libraries work with a facilitator who has gathered adult learners together as a class or group. Working with an adult education program, local literacy council, or other group whose clientele are likely to be low literate is probably the best way to start. Where working with adult education is possible, the library has the outlook and resources to greatly enrich the adult education experience. In other places libraries work with Head Start parents, childcare providers, social services agencies, family literacy programs, community organizations, or faith-based groups to open doors for reaching low-literate adults.

Tours of the library are a common introduction. They allow adults students to see the place, get the layout, and meet a friendly person they may recognize if they come back. Usually some

provision is arranged for getting a library card in connection with this tour. (Filling out paperwork while someone watches is a nightmare for many low-literate adults, so allowing them to fill out the applications in class or in private helps.)

Computer classes are another frequent first step. An adult group comes to the library at a scheduled time along with a teacher or facilitator to learn how to use the Internet or gain some other skill. Non-cardholders are given a chance to apply for the library card ahead of time so they can use the Internet or other library resources while they are there with the group. Once people have the card they are more likely to return independently.

Studies of literacy acquisition in adults show adults with poor decoding skills have even poorer reading comprehension. Discussing what they have read (or heard) is one of the best ways to build that comprehension. Most adult literacy students would not consider joining a book group. But a librarian who forms and moderates a book group in connection with an adult class might bring students into this way of experiencing life through books, and increase their literacy skill by showing them how to interact with text.

After a few experiences with a class book group it is possible an adult learner would come to a regular book discussion at the library. Choosing books that exist in audio format for the regular discussion groups would welcome these patrons as well as those who might have poor vision or prefer an audio format for other reasons.

Other programming possibilities may emerge. There is, for example, increased awareness of storytelling as a literacy mechanism that doesn't depend immediately on print. Offering a workshop on the mechanics of storytelling to an adult education class might help the students discover the value of words. (This in turn opens the door to easy reading material, since folk tales or ethnic tales are often retold in easily read children's books.) Inviting an adult class to a storytelling event or other library outreach program might draw low-literate adults into the possibility of library programming.

Adult reading programs and seasonal reading activities are now offered in libraries. Some libraries host activities such as adult winter reading programs, a holiday reading book group, or a mystery book club. Setting up parallel programs in the library and in an adult class or parent group might be a way to begin to draw in low-literate adults. Including such groups along with their teacher or leader in a reading program might be the introduction someone needs to begin to interact with text or come into the library independently. Choosing easy-to-read books or having audio versions available expands the possibilities for participation. A series on movie books could include books like *Tex* or *The Outsiders*, which are fairly easy reading at about a fifth grade level. A Black History Month reading emphasis could include wonderful titles available as juvenile books.

Reading and writing are two ends in the same process. Writers' programs for adult students are showing promise both for improved literacy and improved life skills. It might be possible for a library staff person to help a teacher or tutoring program start a writer's group for adult learners. Helping students dictate and then read back their experiences is a time-honored literacy method. Helping adult learners write poetry is another possibility, since free verse doesn't necessarily

involve a lots of words and formal structure but invites careful interaction with print and thoughtful use of words.

While individual interactions between patrons and staff are not usually considered programming, they can be vital. One of the difficulties of serving low-literate adults is that many of them are adept at hiding their literacy problems or don't otherwise stand out in the mass of patrons. So it is important for staff to remember that at any point they may be interacting with a patron for whom "check the OPAC" is not a helpful response. Because for most low-literate patrons, coming into the library is an act of courage and hope, and a smiling face and a few minutes of low-key individual help may make as much difference as a fancy program or a huge new reader collection. For many of these reluctant and low-literate patrons, their literacy problems began with authority figures who could have helped and didn't or "made them feel stupid." Library personnel who are helpful and affirming may help reverse earlier experiences and move these patrons in the direction of literacy.

A report on programs for adults in public library outlets, based on a survey conducted in 2000 by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education (ED), is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/frss/publications/2003010/3.asp>. The survey – which defined "programs" as planned activities for groups or individuals offered by libraries to provide information, instruction, or cultural enrichment – obtained information on three areas of interest for adult programming in public library outlets: adult literacy programs, lifelong learning programs, and provision of Internet access for adult independent use.

GED Preparation In Missouri

The GED (General Educational Development) test is a battery of five mostly multiple-choice tests covering reading, mathematics, social studies, science, and writing skills. The writing skills portion includes an essay. The exam takes about seven hours. It is the most widely accepted high school diploma alternative in the United States. The official national GED Web site is <http://www.acenet.edu/cill/ged/index.cfm>. It includes sample test items.

The GED test must be taken at official testing centers at scheduled times. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Web page notes that GED applications may be obtained at most public libraries; the application forms may be printed from http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divvoted/Forms/GED_Application.pdf. It is not possible to complete the application or pay the testing fee online. Instructions for registering to take the official GED test at an authorized center in Missouri are at http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divvoted/ged_take_the_test.htm.

Most of the instruction for GED testing Missouri is offered through classes in connection with DESE, which also runs the Adult Education program in the state. These classes are called AEL (Adult Education and Literacy) programs. A list of AEL class sites can be found at http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/acl_mo_program.htm. The State Literacy Resource Center, LIFT-Missouri, maintains an 800 number (800-729-4443), and serves as a referral to literacy and GED programs statewide. Their Web page, <http://lift-missouri.org/>, also offers a directory of programs. There are a few organized pre-GED efforts not affiliated with AEL, but AEL is the primary provider for GED preparation in the state. Some of these programs are housed in libraries and many AEL teachers or directors are open to local collaborations.

Library patrons may now be using library computers to access a Web-based GED preparation option, the GED Online Study site sponsored by DESE. Unlike commercial GED preparation programs (one of which is called GEDonline), DESE's online GED preparation class is free to Missouri residents. Missourians interested in earning a GED may find this program at <http://www.gedonlineclass.com/>. While anyone can access the site, the lessons are password protected. To obtain the password, the student must enroll in GED Online and be assigned a username and password. At this writing, a prospective student must go to an Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) class, take a free placement test to determine the starting point in the online course, and get a password. This procedure may be subject to change; the Web site for the course (<http://www.gedonlineclass.com/>) will specify the enrollment process. Without a current password from DESE, the student will not be able to access the lessons. While some students may study for the GED entirely online through this program, the GED test must still be taken at official testing centers.

There are also numerous commercial GED preparation and self-study materials commercially available through educational publishers or online. Some students combine classes with self-study from commercial materials. Some libraries choose to add these commercial preparation materials to the collection.

A Note About Reading Levels and Adult Literacy Materials

When we try to collect materials suitable for new or struggling adult readers, we need some way of indicating the difficulty of the text. Usually this is discussed in terms of reading levels. Marking reading levels is an artificial process used to indicate materials suitable for different skill levels. It is imperfect, but it does help us select materials likely to be readable for people who may still be struggling with the reading process.

All these measures are inexact because an individual's ability to read a particular text depends on many factors, including background knowledge, interest, the quality and style of the writing, format, and graphics, as well as a measured reading level. The influence of factors outside textual difficulty is even more pronounced in adults.

Reading levels are usually set by some group expectation; they usually compare readers to each other. They tell what a person in a given grade or instructional framework can be expected to read without help. Reading levels are norms arrived at in different ways. They are only somewhat standardized, in part because reading is a complex prospect.

The most common reading level indicator is grade level; that is, text considered suitable for independent reading at each grade in elementary school. There are several formulas for figuring grade levels. Different formulas sometimes yield different levels on the same text and different materials and tests may figure grade level a little differently. They are general guidelines and this is probably the system most frequently used. They are approximate when applied to adults. Adult new readers usually need text at third grade level or below.

Another reading level, Guided Reading (GR) level, measures the level at which a student can successfully read a text with some help from a teacher. This is also called the instructional reading level. (The level a student can handle without help is usually called the independent reading level.)

Since grade levels are not particularly pertinent for adult students, in adult reading circles the terms “beginning new reader,” “intermediate new reader,” and “advanced new reader” are often used. These terms are also vague, and realistically so. Similarly, terms such as “emerging reader,” “independent reader,” “advanced reader” or “struggling reader” are descriptive, but only somewhat helpful in choosing books.

Another way of measuring and indicating the difficulty of a text is the lexile measurement. Lexiles measure the difficulty of text itself. The purpose of lexiles has been to develop a system that isn't tied to elementary school expectations. Lower lexile levels are easier to read. For practical purposes, the lexile scale runs from 200 to 1700. *Goodnight Moon* has a lexile score of 250, and a lexile score of 1700 would be an advanced college textbook. Lexiles of 500-700 are probably an intermediate adult student reading level. Beginning or struggling readers usually need text with lexiles of below 500. These are admittedly not easy to find for adults.

Lists, Notes, and Sources for Building an Adult New Reader Collection

A Partial List Of Publishers:

New Readers Press

1320 Jamesville Ave., PO Box 888, Syracuse, New York 13210-0888

Phone: (800) 448-8878 Web site: <http://www.newreaderspress.com/>

Probably the largest press for adult literacy; affiliated with ProLiteracy Worldwide, the largest organized volunteer tutor organization. It also offers reference works for tutors/teachers. (ProLiteracy is the merger of Laubach Literacy and Literacy Volunteers of America.)

NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group

4255 West Touhy Avenue, Lincolnwood, Illinois 60712-1975

Phone: (847) 679-5500, or (800) 621-1918 Web site: <http://www.ntc-cb.com/home.php>

A McGraw Hill company that includes Jamestown and Contemporary publishers, with both high interest-low reading level books and classroom materials.

Lakeshore - Basics and Beyond Catalogue

2695 E. Dominguez St., PO Box 6261, Carson, CA 90749

Phone: (800) 421-5354, or (310) 537-8600 Web site: <http://www.lakeshorelearning.com/>

Lakeshore carries Steck-Vaughn materials, including a limited array of general reading materials suitable for adults at lower reading levels. Some include interpolated exercises.

Wieser Educational

30281 Esperanza Department 200, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688-2130

Phone: (800) 880-4433 Web site: http://www.wieser-ed.com/main_frame.html

Most of the materials are for children or instruction, but some may be useful in a new reader setting; carries some Steck-Vaughn and Fearon materials.

Scholastic

555 Broadway

New York, NY 10012

Phone: (212) 343-6100

Web site: <http://www.scholastic.com/>

In Missouri:

2931 East McCarty Street

Jefferson City, MO 65102

(314) 636-5271

A cost effective source of brief novels marketed for young adults, but often appropriate for adults at a medium reading level; also a few parenting materials

Chelsea House Publishers

1974 Sproul Road Ste. 400, Bromall, PA 19008-0914

Phone: (800) 362-9786 Web site: <http://www.chelseahouse.com/>

Nonfiction books for young adults and children, many of which do not look “kiddy” and might be appropriate for adult new readers as well as background knowledge for the GED.

The Brooklyn Public Library Literacy Program recommends these publishers for adult new reader collections; some also offer high-low titles for young adults.

New Readers Press:	www.newreaderspress.com/index_h.html
Avanti Books:	www.avantibooks.com/cgi-bin/avantibooks.storefront
Peppercorn Books:	www.peppercornbooks.com/frame-index.html
Oxford University Press:	www.oup-usa.com/esl
Penguin Readers:	www.penguinreaders.com
Weiser Educational:	www.wieser-ed.com/
Grass Roots Press:	www.literacyservices.com/
Teachers and Writer's Collaborative:	www.twc.org
Thomson & Heinle:	www.heinle.com
Sundance Publishers:	www.sundancepub.com
National Geographic:	www.nationalgeographic.com/education
McGraw-Hill/Contemporary:	www.mhcontemporary.com/download/catalog.php
Saddleback Educational, Inc.:	www.weofferchoices.com/
Dorling Kindersley Publishing:	www.dk.com/
American Library Association:	www.alastore.ala.org
International Reading Association:	www.reading.org
Storyline Press:	www.storylinepress.com

The Brooklyn Public Library also recommends these Web sites for collection development, with adult literacy in mind:

<http://bones.med.ohio-state.edu/staff/mweibel/picturehistory.newsletter.html>
<http://www.vpl.vancouver.bc.ca/branches/LibrarySquare/lit/leisure.html>
<http://archon.educ.kent.edu/Oasis/Resc/Trade/index.html>
<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists/>

*Source: Erna Golde, Education Coordinator
Brooklyn Public Library Literacy Program, 431 Sixth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215*

Cyndy Colletti, Illinois State Library, offers these suggestions for finding material for adult new readers:

Choosing and Using Books with Adult New Readers, by M. Weibel.
<http://bones.med.ohio-state.edu/staff/mweibel/picturehistory.newsletter.html>

Leisure Books for Adult New Readers, Vancouver Public Library.
<http://www.vpl.vancouver.bc.ca/branches/LibrarySquare/lit/leisure.html>

Recommended Trade Books for Adult Literacy Programs: Annotated Bibliographies with Teaching Suggestions; Ohio Literacy Resource Center, Compiled by Patricia L. Bloem, Nancy D. Padak, and Connie Sapin.
<http://archon.educ.kent.edu/Oasis/Resc/Trade/index.html>

PLA (Public Library Association) publishes “the best of” list for new reader books from a variety of publishers every few years. Many are not at the lowest reading levels, but they will suggest a core for a new reader collection. Lists for 1998 and 2000 are printed in this handbook, and can also be found at <http://archive.pla.org/resources/newreader.html>.

Notes

Some books sold for the juvenile market are also good candidates for the adult new reader collection. Educational publishing houses often sell trade books marked with a reading level; the lower the easier, and in other ways vendors may mark some titles as easier to read than others. Once an adult has a reading level roughly corresponding to fourth grade, the options greatly increase. An individual's ability to read a particular book depends on many factors, including background knowledge, interest in the subject, the clarity and quality of the writing, illustrations, and even format, as well as a measured reading level and vocabulary. Some of the same principles for choosing literacy-friendly materials for young adults apply to adult new reader collections. Although they must often be chosen title by title, some young adult novels and nonfiction books are manageable and interesting for low-literate adults. For example, two juvenile titles that have been filmed for TV, *Sarah Plain and Tall* and *Tuck Everlasting*, have grade level equivalents of about 3rd and 5th grade respectively. (This points out that the current educational system expects a rather high literacy level by third grade.) The YALSA (Young Adult Library Services Association) booklists feature award-winning books chosen by members of ALA. The Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers often offers good possibilities for adult new readers (<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists/>).

Some juvenile science series and biographies have the library advantage of serving more than one kind of patron. If the budget and organization system permit, having copies of some books shelved in both the youth area and the adult area might make them accessible to new readers. Children's books are increasingly books for all ages and all situations. Shelving a few in an adult area might introduce some adults at all reading levels to the wonder of children's literature. Parenting is a wonderful and commonly used excuse to get adults to read children's books at the reading level they need. Children's literature is also a rich font of ethnic experience well told.

Some organizations offer easy reading material on topics like parenting or job seeking. Literacy programs are increasingly printing collections of student essays and narratives; they usually have to be obtained one at a time from programs (usually found on the Web) but they might fill a gap in the collection. Adult education organizations are also producing collected writings from people in their own programs. Well-chosen poetry, especially the modern free-verse kind, may be readable when prose at the same “reading level” is too difficult. Suitable poetry would be brief and concentrate on meaning, rather than long narratives or details. Poetry also expresses the kinds of emotional exploration that often comes with the experience of returning to a literacy program as an adult. (Newberry winner *Out of the Dust*, for example, contains deep themes and issues, especially for women, at about a fifth grade reading level.)

Once we have the books, we have the issue of getting the low-literate patron and the books connected. Pro-Literacy Worldwide, the major adult education group, advises grouping low-reading-level adult materials together in a conveniently located new reader collection. This is intended to spare these patrons the discomfort of having to ask a lot of questions, draw attention to themselves, use signage frustrating for them, lose time trying to sort out what they can use, fail with the OPAC, and negotiate an unfamiliar situation. The grouped collection is the most common way to handle materials for low-literate adults. Some librarians report problems with it, including the reluctance of some adults to be seen at the New Reader shelf. A partial solution is to put the shelf in a convenient but not highly visible place, and carefully choose the name of this collection. Titles like “Continuing Education,” “Quick Books for Busy People,” “Easy Reads,” “Literacy Collection,” or a local reference like “Ms. Linda’s Picks” are often suggested.

No matter how we handle an adult new reader collection, most low literate adults aren’t used to the idea that reading books can be part of daily life and the collection probably will not circulate like other collections do. A library that chooses to have adult new reader material does so out of a sense of service, not statistics. But if we are really interested in serving our total communities and changing the literacy situation in Missouri, the investment has possibility and promise.

2000 PLA Top Titles for Adult New Readers

The Resources for Adult New Readers Committee of PLA's Library Services Cluster is pleased to offer its list of Top Titles for Adult New Readers. The booklist is meant to recognize such titles and to encourage the availability of materials for the adult new reader. Books chosen for the list demonstrate high appeal in terms of content, format and illustration. Titles are eighth grade reading level or below on the Fry Readability Scale. The books listed were published primarily in 2000. We encourage you to duplicate, distribute, and share this bibliography.

***Baseball.* By James Kelley.** Eyewitness Books, Dorling Kindersley, 2000. Fry Reading Level 7. ISBN 0789452413, \$15.95. Celebrate America's national pastime in pictures; the history, the heroes, the gear, and the games. Everything you ever wanted to know, from how a diamond is laid out to how a mitt is constructed is in this volume. Lavishly illustrated with photos.

***Big Book of Cars.* By Trevor Lord.** Dorling Kindersley, 1999. Fry Reading Level 7. ISBN 078944738x, \$14.95. Huge, colorful photos illustrate the details of 13 amazing cars from the pink Cadillac of the 1950s to futuristic cars on the drawing boards.

***Girls' Guide to Hunting and Fishing.* By Melissa Bank.** Viking, 1999. Fry Reading Level 6. ISBN 0140293248, \$12.95. This funny novel, set in New York City, follows Jane Rosenthal's search for love and happiness. Appealing to women who have ever looked for "Mr. Right."

***Katie.com: My Story.* By Katherine Tarbox.** Dutton, 2000. Fry Reading Level 6. ISBN 0525945431, \$19.95. A lonely, alienated teen finds a whole new social scene online. Through e-mail messages, she falls in love for the first time. But when they meet, her dream man is actually a middle-aged pedophile.

***The Monster Stick & Other Appalachian Tale Tales.* By Paul & Bil Lepp.** August House, 1999. Fry Reading Level 3.7. ISBN 0974835771, \$9.95. A collection of outrageous original tales about weather, fish, hunting, politics, and education. The clever, whimsical art of the book design reels the reader into the Lepp Mountain Tall Tales.

***Wake of the Perdido Star.* By Gene Hackman and Daniel Henihan.** New Market Press, 1999. Fry Reading Level 6. ISBN 1557043981, \$24.95. Set in the years 1805-1808, this sea adventure depicts the life of Jack O'Reilly, sailor and renegade obsessed with revenging the murder of his parents. Includes fascinating descriptions of early 19th century salvage operations.

They Were My Friends. Oakland Readers Health Project. Fry Reading level 1-2. ISBN 1-928836-03-8, \$10.

I Could Leap Through a Cheerio. Oakland Readers Health Project. Fry Reading level 3-4. ISBN 1-928836-04-6 \$10

Quest for Life: The Search Deep within Your Soul to Find Your True Inner Spirit and Reason for Being. Women of Oakland. Fry Reading Level 1-2. ISBN 1-98836-05-4, \$10.

Proclamation of Independence: Announcement of Personal Freedom and Total Self-Reliance, the Declaration That You Are an Individual of Worth and Value. Women of Oakland. Fry Reading Level 3-4. ISBN 1-928836-06-2, \$10.

These four titles are life stories told by students in the Oakland Public Library's Second Start Adult Literacy Program. The two series of oral histories, Oakland Readers Health Project and the Women of Oakland, consist of two readers, each reader containing edited student interviews. Besides student stories, the volumes include follow up questions and photographs of the authors. All were published in 1999 and are available through Peppercorn Books.

The Jack Sloan Series by Agnes M. Hagen: New Readers Press, 2001. Fry Reading Level 3. ISBN 1-56853-048-X; 049-8; 050-1; 051-X. Also available from Peppercorn Books.

Tin Star Promise.

Justice on Horseback.

Shotgun Revenge.

Mississippi Stranger.

Jack Sloan is the hero of this four volume series set on the Texas frontier. When his wife is killed by outlaws and his young son abducted, Sloan tracks down the killers and brings them to justice. His reward is being made Sheriff. Further adventures, love, intrigue and excitement are found in the other three titles.

Johannes Gutenberg. By Betty Lou Kratoville. High Noon Books, 2000. Fry Reading Level 2. ISBN 1571281428. Price: check with publisher. Overcoming many obstacles, Johannes Gutenberg pursued his dream of developing the printing press and changed the world. Interesting brief overview of the history of books.

The Wright Brothers. By Betty Lou Kratoville. High Noon Books, 2000. Fry Reading Level 2. ISBN 1571281452. The Wright Brothers' interest in flight, which led to the first powered flight, inspires readers to achieve their own dreams. Illustrated with black and white photographs.

These two titles are part of the Problem Solvers Biographies Series. Of the five titles, these were selected because the more sophisticated illustrations would appeal to adults.

1999 Top Titles for Adult New Readers

Out of the Dust. By Karen Hesse. Scholastic press, 1997. Hardcover, \$15.95 (ISBN 0-590-36080-9). A moving account of a girl's life in the Dust Bowl during the 1930's. A great candidate for read-aloud and read-along. Reading level 5-8.

And Not Afraid to Dare: The Stories of Ten African-American Women. By Tonya Bolden. Scholastic Press, 1998. Hardcover, \$16.95 (ISBN 0-590-48080-4). Present and past African-American women are brought to life. Stresses self-esteem and goal-setting. Reading level 8+. May be challenging for some readers.

Baby Help. By Marilyn Reynolds. Morning Glory Press, 1998. Softcover, \$8.95 (ISBN 1-88536-27-7). Covers problems of spousal abuse and shelter living from the teenage angle. Material for all ages. Fictionalized account. Reading level 6.

***Celestial River: Creation Tales of the Milky Way.* By Andrea Stenn Stryer.** August House Publishers, 1998. Hardcover \$14.95 (ISBN 0-87483-529-1). Creation tales feature Japanese, Greek, Maori, Navajo, and other world tales. Excellent for read-aloud and read along. Reading level 5–8.

***Greek Myths Western Style: Toga Tales with an Attitude.* By Barbara McBride-Smith.** August House Publishers, 1998. Hardcover, \$14.95 (ISBN 0-87483-524-0). Read-aloud and discussion versions of classic Greek tales for the new reader. Reading level 7–9.

***They Never Gave Up: Adventures in Early Aviation.* By Michael Wilkey.** Orca Book Publishers, 1998. Softcover, \$9.95 (ISBN 1-55143-092-4). History of early aviation is covered from Icarus to modern beginnings, including both men and women flyers. Easy to break down into segments. Reading level 6+.

***Women of Hope: African Americans Who Made a Difference.* By Joyce Hansen.** Scholastic Press, 1998. Hardcover, \$16.95 (ISBN 0-590- 93973-4). Biographical sketches plus portraits of African-American women trailblazers. Good format and photos. Reading level 6–8+.

Job Skills Series. From Capstone High/ Low Books, 1998.

***Communicating with Others.* By Stuart Schwartz and Craig Conley.** Hardcover \$19 (ISBN 1-56065-716-2).

***Working as a Team.* By Stuart Schwartz and Craig Conley.** Hardcover \$19 (ISBN 1-56065-718-9). These books offer succinct information on life skills necessary for getting and keeping a job. Glossary, addresses, Web sites, and bibliography. Reading level 8+.

Look at Work Series. From Capstone High/Low Books, 1998.

***Exploring Job Skills.* By Stuart Schwartz and Craig Conley.** Hardcover, \$14.25 (ISBN 1-56065-712-X).

***Interviewing for a Job.* By Stuart Schwartz and Craig Conley.** Hardcover \$19 (ISBN 1-56065-714-6).

Brief And Useful Tips For The Adult Job Seeker. Easy to read and use; good for English as a Second Language readers. Reading level 8+. May be challenging for some readers.

Streamlined Shakespeare Series. From Academic Therapy Publications, High Noon Books Division, 1999.

***Merchant of Venice.* Adapted by Peggy L. Anderson and Judith D. Anderson.** Softcover, \$7 (ISBN 1-57128-123-1).

***Romeo and Juliet.* Adapted by Peggy L. Anderson and Judith D. Anderson.** Softcover, \$7 (ISBN 1-57128-124-X). This attractive series includes both narrative adaptations of the stories and easy-to-follow adaptations of the plays. Includes brief biography of Shakespeare, a history of the Globe Theater, and well-known quotations from the plays. Reading level 4+.

Teen Parenting Skills Series. From Morning Glory Press, 1998.

***Discipline from Birth to Three.* By Jeanne Lindsay and Sally McCullough.** Softcover, \$12.95 (ISBN 1-885356- 36-6).

***Your Baby's First Year.* By Jeanne Warren Lindsay.** Softcover, \$12.95 (ISBN 1-885356-33-1); hardcover, \$18.95 (1-885356-32-3).

***Your Pregnancy and Newborn Journey.* By Jeanne Warren Lindsay and Jean Burnelli.** Softcover, \$12.95 (ISBN 1-885356-30-7); Hardcover, \$18-95 (ISBN1-885356-29-3). Good mix of child development and practical parenting information. Easy to locate examples. Reading level 6–8+.

1998 Top Titles for Adult New Readers

***Getting to Know Computers.* By Mary Beth Lundgren.** Cleveland, OH; Project Learn, 1997. Writers Group Books Series. Fry Reading Level 3. \$8.50. Excellent book that is available in both a controlled vocabulary version for new readers and a generic version for those who are computer illiterate. A keyboard insert makes understanding easier. Clear explanations of computer terms told in a non-threatening manner. Excellent for ESL.

***Heartwood.* By Nikky Finney.** Lexington, KY; University Press of Kentucky, 1997. New Books for New Readers Series, Kentucky Humanities Council. Fry Reading Level 5+. \$4.50 (ISBN 0-8131-09108). Hurtful racial words somehow help two small town Kentucky women, one black and one white, discover their fears and prejudices and become friends. Told from several perspectives with characters that are real and likable.

Recommended Single Titles

***Africatrek.* By Dan Buetner.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. Fry Reading Level 8+. \$17.95 (ISBN 0-8225-2951-3). Eye-catching, colorful oversize book with map, glossary, and pronunciation guide follows a bicycle trek 11,855 miles across Africa. A modern true-life adventure. Useful for ESL.

***Andre Agassi: Reaching the Top Again.* By Jeff Savage.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. Sports Achiever Series. Fry Reading Level 8+. hardcover \$14.95 (ISBN 0-8225-2894-0); paper \$5.95 (ISBN 0-8225-9750-0). Biography of the tennis star who was on top once and is working hard to reclaim that status. Showcases determination.

***Anfernee Hardaway: Basketball's Lucky Penny.* By Brad Townsend.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. Sports Achievers Series. Fry Reading Level 8+. Hardcover \$14.95 (ISBN 0-8225-3652-8); paper \$5.95 (ISBN 0-8225-9766-7). Hardaway overcame poor grades, suspect friends, and a gunshot wound to become one of the most charismatic basketball players of this era. His strict grandmother provided the basis for his character and determination.

***A Bosnian Family.* By Robin Landeau Silverman.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. Journey Between Two Worlds Series. Fry Reading Level 7. Hardcover \$16.95 (ISBN 0-8225-3404-5). A real life story of a Bosnian family relocated into the heartland of America. Poignant and forceful look at the differences in cultures as well as the similarities. Describes the Muslim life. Pronunciation guide, maps.

***Carmine's Story.* By Arlene Schulman.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. Fry Reading Level 5. Hardcover \$15.95 (ISBN 0-8225-2582-8). Extremely moving account of a ten-year-old AIDS patient. Told in first person. Bibliography, resource listings, excellent glossary. The boy died shortly before the book was completed.

***Denzel Washington.* By Alex Simmons.** Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Contemporary African Americans Series. Fry Reading Level 4–6. Hardcover \$24.26 (ISBN 0-8172-3986-3). A biography of a role model for all, not just African Americans. Actor, humanitarian, family man. Easy to read with excellent illustrations and good size print. Glossary and color illustrations.

***East African Folktales.* By Vincent Muliwa Kituku.** Little Rock, AR; August House, 1997. World Storytelling Series. Fry Reading Level 8+. Trade paper \$9.95 (ISBN 0-8748-3489-9). Collection of short, simple East African morality tales that can be read aloud or told. Tales are told in both English and Kamba.

***Edward James Olmos.* By Louis Carrillo.** Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Contemporary Hispanic Americans Series. Fry Reading Level 4–6. Hardcover \$24.26 (ISBN 0-8172-39899-8). Olmos, an icon and role model for many Mexican Americans, is portrayed in this biography. Covers his charitable and theatrical work. Color illustrations as well as easy-to-read print.

***Ferrets.* By Sylvia A. Johnson.** Minneapolis, MN; Carolrhoda Books, 1997. Fry Reading Level 5–7. Hardcover \$14.95 (ISBN 0-57505-014-5) Easy-to-read, color and black-and-white illustrations about ferrets, an animal people are now keeping as pets.

***A Friend In Need.* By Sonja Massie.** Syracuse, NY; Signal Hill Publications, 1997. Janet Dailey's Love Scenes Series. Fry Reading Level 3–5. Paper \$3.50 (ISBN 1-55853-028-5). Adult interest romance with a very low reading level. A lonely man and an independent but needy lady can only spell romance. Love, hope, and a happy ending.

***Heaven Sent.* By Nina K. Bette.** Syracuse, NY; Signal Hill Publications, 1997. Janet Dailey's Love Scenes Series. Fry Reading Level 3–5. Paper \$3.50 (ISBN 1-56853-030-7). Adult interest romance guaranteed to appeal to the female adult new reader, particularly those who like stories that include the ever-popular angels. Easy-to-read story about an angel who wins her stripes by helping a young woman find love.

***If Sarah Will Take Me.* By Dane Bauchard.** Custer, WA; Orca Books, 1997. Fry Reading Level 6. Hardcover \$16.95 (ISBN 1-55143-081-9). This well-made book with lovely illustrations will touch the hearts of readers. Moving words and concepts tell of a young male paraplegic whose nurse becomes his wife. Family Literacy and ESL.

***LaDonna Harris.* By Michael Schwartz.** Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Contemporary Native Americans Series. Fry Reading Level 4–6. Hardcover \$24.26 (ISBN 0-8172-3995-2). Well written with excellent photos. Biography of a Comanche-Irish woman, ex-

wife of an United States senator, working for the rights of Native Americans and women. Multicultural use.

***The Lady and the Cowboy.* By Christine Anne Wenger.** Syracuse, NY; Signal Hill Publications. Janet Dailey's Love Scenes Series. Fry Reading Level 3–5. Paper \$3.50 (ISBN 1-56853-029-3). In this high interest/low reading level romance novel set in the 1880's, a young woman returns to her home in Wyoming to discover her father has died and left the homestead to a handsome neighbor. Mass market format makes these romances attractive for adult new readers.

***Lyn St. James: Driven to Be First.* By Russ Olney.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. The Achievers Series. Fry Reading Level 7+. Hardcover \$14.95 (ISBN 0-8225-3890-8); paper \$5.95 (ISBN 0-8225-9749-7). Taught by her mother to drive, and helped with mechanics by her father, this racing champion and mold breaker was a rookie of the year at the world famous Indianapolis 500 auto race. Excellent photographs. For all race fans.

***The Magic of Love.* By Alyssa Logan.** Syracuse, NY; Signal Hill Publications, 1997. Janet Dailey's Love Scenes Series. Fry Reading Level 3–5. Paper \$3.50 (ISBN 1-56853-031-5). Mass-market size plus high interest/low reading level make this light romance attractive to adult new readers. The clown and the single mom/businessperson find love and happiness. Clowning around has a happy ending for young—and old.

***Marilyn Monroe: Norma Jeane's Dream.* By Katherine E. Krohn.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. Newsmaker Biography Series. Fry Reading Level 7. Hardcover \$16.95 (ISBN 0-8225-4930-1). Index includes films; bibliography includes books, magazines, and newspaper articles. A short, non-speculative biography of the tragic Hollywood icon, Marilyn Monroe.

***Maya Lin.* By Bettina Ling.** Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Contemporary Asian Americans Series. Fry Reading Level 4–6. Hardcover \$19.95 (ISBN 0-8172-3992-8). Well-written and easy-to-read biography of a Japanese-American citizen who designed the Vietnam Wall as well as other memorials. The Ohio-born artist is a role model for perseverance against prejudice of all types. Useful for ESL.

***Nely Galan.* By Janet Rodriguez.** Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Contemporary Hispanic Americans Series. Fry Reading Level 4–6. Hardcover \$24.26 (ISBN 0-8172-3991-X). Very readable and well illustrated. ESL tutors as well as mainstream literacy programs will find uses for this biography which highlights the life and success of a talented young woman of Cuban ancestry who used television to learn English, and became an entrepreneur in television and the show business world.

***On the Way to Over the Hill.* By Grace Lee.** Seattle, WA; EduCare Press, 1997. Fry Reading Level 8+. Paper \$12.95 (ISBN 0-944638-11-2). Essays and separate collected pieces of the newspaper columns of the refreshingly candid Lee, who doesn't seem over the hill at age 72. Feisty and without guile, this work will appeal to the older new reader who is willing to stretch her reading prowess. Can be read in bits and pieces. Vocabulary and reading level on the high end but well worth the effort.

***Orphan Trains to Missouri.* By Michael D. Patrick and Evelyn Goodrich Trickel.** Columbia, MO; University of Missouri Press, 1997. Missouri Heritage Series. Fry Reading Level 6+. Paper \$9.95 (ISBN 0-8262-1121-6). High-end level for adult new readers, of particular interest to New York and Midwestern readers. Tales of children who were taken willingly and unwillingly from the eastern cities and relocated with families out west. Some were welcomed as family members; others, as cheap labor.

***Paper Airplanes to Build and Fly.* By Emery Kelly.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. Fry Reading 8+. (ISBN 0-8225-2401-5). Another high-end reading level book for the hobbyist and those who have kids at home or who are still kids at heart themselves. Great for do-it-together family literacy. Patterns for 12 planes that really fly included. Fun way to learn about aerodynamics.

***People of China and Their Food.* By Ann L. Burckhardt.** Mankato, MN; Capstone, 1996. Multicultural Cookbook Series. Fry Reading Level 3–4. Hardcover \$14.25 (ISBN 1-56065-3). Color-filled. Kitchen safety section included. Recipes use commonly available food. Explains a bit about the customs and holidays of the country. Useful for ESL as well as family literacy and for culturally diverse settings.

***People of Mexico and Their Food.* By Ann L. Burckhardt.** Mankato, MN; Capstone, 1997. Multicultural Cookbook Series. Fry Reading Level 3–4. Hardcover \$14.25 (ISBN 1-56065-432-5). A wonderful introduction to Mexico, this cookbook gives detailed recipes for popular Mexican cuisine. Easy to find ingredients. Mouthwatering color pictures. ESL and family literacy uses.

***People of Russia and Their Food.* By Ann L. Burckhardt.** Mankato, MN; Capstone, 1996. Multicultural Cookbook Series. Fry Reading Level 3–4. Hardcover \$14.25 (ISBN 1-56065-435-X). Color filled; metric measures included. Notes the demise of the Soviet Union. Available ingredients used. Good recipes to make with the entire family. Excellent way to learn about other cultures. ESL and family literacy uses.

***Revolutionary Poet: The Story of Phillis Wheatley.* By Maryann Weidt.** Minneapolis, MN; Carolrhoda Books, 1997. Creative Minds Series. Fry Reading Level 6+. Hardcover \$14.95 (ISBN 1-57505-087-4); paper \$5.95 (ISBN 1-57505-059-5). Tells of a very gifted woman, a free Negro in colonial America, whose life in Boston provided fodder for her poetry that lives today. Gives a look at slavery in early America. Bibliography, well indexed. Black-and-white drawings enhance the story.

***Scottie Pippen: Reluctant Superstar.* By Robert Schnakenberg.** Minneapolis, MN; Lerner, 1997. Sports Achievers Series. Fry Reading Level 7+. Hardcover \$14.95 (ISBN 0-8225-3653-6); paper \$5.95 (ISBN 0-8225-9767-5). Current to end of 1996 year. Career highlights included. Color photographs. Brief but telling look at the personal and professional life of a basketball star. Covers Pippen's exploits in college, the Olympics, and the pros.

Seiji Ozawa. By Sheri Tan. Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Contemporary Asian Americans Series. Fry Reading Level 4–6. Hardcover \$19.95 (ISBN 8172-3993-6). Famed conductor of the Boston Symphony. Born to Japanese parents, lived in China, went to Japan when he was nine, and became an American citizen in 1966. Tells of his life in China, Japan, and the United States. Truly multicultural. Excellent for ESL.

***Teddy Bears.* By Arlene Ehrbach.** Minneapolis, MN; Carolrhoda Books. Household History Series. Fry Reading Level 7+. Hardcover \$16.95 (ISBN 1-5705-019-6); paper \$7.95 (ISBN 1-5705-222-9). For arctophiles (bear lovers) of all ages. History and background of the teddy bear in America and the world. Glossary, bibliography, and lots of illustrations in both color and black and white.

***Toni Morrison.* By Diane Patrick-Wexler.** Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Contemporary African Americans Series. Fry Reading Level 4–6. Hardcover \$16.95 (ISBN 0-8172-398-3). Life of the talented African-American writer whose work has been awarded the Nobel and Pulitzer Prizes.

***Wynton Marsalis.* By Veronica Freeman.** Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Contemporary African Americans Series. Fry Reading Level 4–6. Hardcover \$24.26 (ISBN 0-8172-3988-X). An inspiring biography of a highly successful black musician. Stresses family ties. Covers personal as well as professional life. Color illustration, bibliography, and glossary.

FYI. Syracuse, NY; Signal Hill, 1997. For Your Information Series. Fry Reading Level 3–5. Paper \$8.95 each.

Control Your Money. (ISBN 1-56953-033-1).

Get That Job. (ISBN 1-56853-035-8).

Having A Baby. (ISBN 1-56853-032-3).

Women's Health (ISBN 1-56853-034-X).

These books are chock-full of easy-to-read information written expressly for adult new readers. Financial planning and management made understandable; a step-by-step guide to job hunting; a guide to a healthy pregnancy for the baby, the mother, and the rest of the family; a concise, informative, and non-judgmental look at the physical, mental, and sexual health of women.

***Who's That in the White House.* By Rose Blue and Corinne J. Nader.** Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1998. Fry Reading Level 6+. Hardcover \$27.83 each.

The Expansion Years: Buchanan to McKinley. (ISBN 0-8172-4302-X).

The Formative Years: Jackson to Pierce. (ISBN 0-8172-4301-1).

The Founding Years: Washington to J. Q. Adams. (ISBN 0-8172-4300-3).

The Modern Years: Nixon to Clinton. (ISBN 0-8172-4305-4).

The Progressive Years: T. Roosevelt to Hoover. (ISBN 0-8172-4303-8).

The Turbulent Years: F. Roosevelt to Johnson. (ISBN 0-8172-4304-6).

Covers each administration from George Washington to Bill Clinton. Includes lively writing and something positive to report about each president. Excellent maps, glossaries, and indexes. Contains physical descriptions of the presidents, political history, and includes other important historical figures. Well illustrated. Recommended for ESL.

Atlas of . . . Series. Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1997. Fry Reading Level 6+. Hardcover \$32.83 each.

Atlas of the Rain Forests. By Anna Lewington. (ISBN 0-8172-4756-4).

Atlas of Threatened Cultures. By Paul Mason. (ISBN 0-8172-4755-6).

Oversize format with lots of color illustrations including maps. Excellent bibliographies for all age groups. Shows how rain forests are vital to the survival of the earth as we know it. The atlas for threatened cultures has a people page and a continent page to better present information about the state of people all over the world.

Capstone Short Biography Series. Mankato, MN; Capstone, 1997. Fry Reading Level 3–4. \$14.25 each.

Women Explorers in Africa. By Margo McLoone. (ISBN 1-56065-505-4).

Women Explorers in Asia. By Margo McLoone. (ISBN 1-56065-506-2).

Women Explorers in North and South America. By Margo McLoone. (ISBN 1-56065-507-1).

Women Explorers in the Polar Regions. By Margo McLoone. (ISBN 1-56065-508-9).

Brief biographical sketches of 19th- and 20th-century women who were adventurous and independent. Photo illustrated. Good for building self-esteem.

Shared Umbrella Series. by Jan Goethel. Eau Claire, WI; Chippewa Valley Publishing, 1997. Fry Reading Level 1+. Paper, \$16.00 per set.

Carmen's Day.

Go To Work, Fred!

A Holiday for Me.

Low-level reading/high interest stories of work and family especially for the adult new reader and those new to America. Amusing and complimentary cartoon-like drawings.

Treasure Hunters Series. Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1998. Fry Reading Level 4+. Hardcover \$24.97 each.

The Search for Gold. By Nicola Barber. (ISBN 0-8172-4837-4).

The Search for Lost Cities. By Nicola Barber. (ISBN 0-8172-4840-4).

The Search for Sunken Treasure. By Nicola Barber and Anita Ganeri. (ISBN 0-8172-4838-8).

The Search for Tombs. By Anita Ganeri. (ISBN 0-8172-4839-0).

Attractive and colorful format with a good mix of illustrations and photographs. The armchair adventurer can look for the Titanic, lost cities on five continents, and gold the world over.

Explore graves and tombs and see if there are really cursed ones. Books can be read piecemeal.

The Untamed World Series. Austin, TX; Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1998. Fry Reading Level 6–8. \$26.24 each.

Alligators/Crocodiles. By Karen Dudley. (ISBN 0-8172-4573-1).

Bald Eagles. By Karen Dudley. (ISBN 0-8172-4571-5).

Black Rhinos. By E. Melanie Watt. (ISBN 0-8172-4572-3).

Blue Whales. By Patricia Miller Schroeder. (ISBN 0-8172-4570-7).

Elephants. By Karen Dudley. (ISBN 0-8172-4565-0).

Giant Pandas. By Karen Dudley. (ISBN 0-8172-4566-9).

Gorillas. By Patricia Miller Schroeder. (ISBN 0-8172-4562-6).

Great White Sharks. By Marie Levine. (ISBN 0-8172-4560-3).

***Grizzly Bears.* By Janice Packer.** (ISBN 0-8172-4563-4).

***Jaguars.* By E. Melanie Watt.** (ISBN 0-8172-4568-5).

***Whooping Cranes.* By Karen Dudley.** (ISBN 0-8172-4564-2).

***Wolves.* by Karen Dudley.** (ISBN 0-8172-4561-8).

Unique combination of science and biology, legends and literary allusions, environment, conservation, and history. Each book has sections for twenty interesting facts, a good mix of illustrations and photos, and is well indexed. Every work in the series contains maps, and provides different points of view as well as good addresses for more information. Excellent treatment of the material.

***World in the Time of . . . Series.* By Fiona Macdonald.** Parsippany, NJ; Silver Burdett Press, 1997. Fry Reading Level 4+. Hardcover \$19.95 each; paper \$9.95 each.

World in the Time of Abraham Lincoln. (ISBN 0-382-39745-2); paper (ISBN 0-382-39744-4).

World in the Time of Alexander the Great. (ISBN 0-382-39743-6); paper (ISBN 0-382-39742-7).

World in the Time of Marco Polo. (ISBN 0-382-39749-5)paper (ISBN 0-382-39748-7).

World in the Time of Tutankhamen. (ISBN 0-382-39747-9) paper (ISBN 0-382-39476-0).

Beautiful illustrations enhance these borderline reference books that give a worldview of history during a particular era. Excellent timelines. Maps and charts, good glossaries.

Missouri Heritage Readers

Since 1994, the University of Missouri Press has been publishing a series of books targeted to adult new readers called the Missouri Heritage Reader Series. Each book explores a particular aspect of the state's rich cultural heritage. Focusing on people, places, historical events, and the details of daily life, these books illustrate the ways in which people from all parts of the world contributed to the development of the state and the region. The books incorporate documentary and oral history, folklore, and informal literature in a way that makes these resources accessible to all Missourians.

Even though they're intended primarily for adult new readers, the Missouri Heritage Readers Series are invaluable to readers of all ages interested in the cultural and social history of Missouri. Rebecca B. Schroeder is the general editor for all 19 editions. To order, contact:

University of Missouri Press (www.umsystem.edu/upress/)

2910 LeMone Blvd., Columbia, MO 65201

Phone 573-882-7641

Fax 573-884-4498

Comments, inquiries, and catalog requests: upress@umsystem.edu

Order department: 800-828-1894 OR orders@umsystem.edu

Arrow Rock: The Story of a Missouri Village, by Authorene Wilson Phillips. Arrow Rock, so named because Native Americans once went there to shape their arrowheads from the flint found along the Missouri River, is a small historic village. Today fewer than one hundred people call Arrow Rock home, but its scenic location and rich history continue to attract thousands of visitors every year. *Arrow Rock: The Story of a Missouri Village* provides insight into the progression of history and its effects on one small Missouri town.

Blind Boone: Missouri's Ragtime Pioneer, by Jack A. Batterson. Often overlooked by ragtime historians, John William "Blind" Boone had a remarkably successful and influential music career that endured for almost fifty years. *Blind Boone: Missouri's Ragtime Pioneer* provides the first full account of the Missouri-born musician's amazing story of overcoming the odds.

Called to Courage: Four Women in Missouri History, by Margot Ford McMillen and Heather Roberson. While there are many accessible biographies of important Missouri men, there are few such biographies of Missouri women. This book, written by a mother-and-daughter team, traces the lives of four women who played important roles in their eras. These women were exceptional because they had the courage to make the best of their abilities, forging trails and breaking the barriers that separated women's spheres from those of men. Featured in the book are "Ignon Quaconisen," a Native American woman who lived during the 1700s; Olive Boone, wife of Nathan Boone; Martha Jane Chisley, a former slave whose son became the first nationally known African American priest; and Nell Donnelly, a Kansas City businesswoman.

Catfish, Fiddles, Mules, and More: Missouri's State Symbols, by John C. Fisher. Throughout history symbols have been used in a variety of ways, often playing important roles. Each state has its own representative symbols – ranging from seals, flags, and buildings to rocks, minerals,

plants, and animals – but how did they come to be chosen? In *Catfish, Fiddles, Mules, and More*, John C. Fisher provides an answer to that question for Missourians with a handy reference on the various official symbols of the state.

Food in Missouri: A Cultural Stew by Madeline Matson. Corn, squash, and beans from the Native Americans; barbecue sauces from the Spanish; potatoes and sausages from the Germans: Missouri's foods include a bountiful variety of ingredients. In *Food in Missouri: A Cultural Stew*, Madeline Matson takes readers on an enticing journey through the history of this state's food, from the hunting and farming methods of the area's earliest inhabitants, through the contributions of the state's substantial African American population, to the fast-food purveyors of the microwave age.

George Caleb Bingham: Missouri's Famed Painter and Forgotten Politician, by Paul Nagel. In this fascinating work, Paul Nagel tells the full story of George Caleb Bingham, one of America's greatest nineteenth-century painters. While Nagel assesses Bingham's artistic achievements, he also portrays another and very important part of the artist's career – his service as a statesman and political leader in Missouri

German Settlement in Missouri: New Land, Old Ways, by Robyn K. Burnett and Ken Luebbering. German immigrants came to America for two main reasons: to seek opportunities in the New World, and to avoid political and economic problems in Europe. In *German Settlement in Missouri*, Robyn Burnett and Ken Luebbering demonstrate the crucial role that the German immigrants and their descendants played in the settlement and development of Missouri's architectural, political, religious, economic, and social landscape. Relying heavily on unpublished memoirs, letters, diaries, and official records, the authors provide important new narratives and firsthand commentary from the immigrants themselves.

Hoecakes, Hambone, and All That Jazz: African American Traditions in Missouri, by Rose M. Nolen. Many African Americans in Missouri are the descendants of slaves brought by the French or the Spanish to the Louisiana Territory in the 1700s or by Americans who moved from slave states after the Louisiana Purchase in the 1800s. In *Hoecakes, Hambone, and All That Jazz*, Rose M. Nolen explores the ways in which those Missouri "immigrants with a difference" – along with other Africans brought to America against their will – developed cultural, musical, and religious traditions that allowed them to retain customs from their past while adapting to the circumstances of the present.

Immigrant Women in the Settlement of Missouri, by Robyn Burnett and Ken Luebbering. The authors first looked at how immigration has affected Missouri's cultural landscape in their book, *German Settlement in Missouri: New Land, Old Ways*. Now they tell the stories of women from all across Europe who left the Old World for Missouri. Drawing heavily on the women's own stories, *Immigrant Women in the Settlement of Missouri* illustrates common elements of their lives without minimizing the diversity and complexity of each individual's experience.

Into the Spotlight: Four Missouri Women, by Margot Ford McMillen and Heather Roberson. As a companion volume to their earlier book, *Called to Courage: Four Women in Missouri History*, Margot Ford McMillen and Heather Roberson's *Into the Spotlight* provides the biographies of four more remarkable Missouri women. Although these women came from

radically different circumstances, they all shared a common sense of purpose, determination, and courage, and each used her own unique position to empower herself and others. Women featured include: Sacred Sun, a Native American of the Osage tribe; Emily Newell Blair, a worker for women's voting rights; Josephine Baker, a star of song and stage and a fervent civil rights activist; and Elizabeth Virginia Wallace, who married President Harry Truman.

Jane Froman: Missouri's First Lady of Song, by Ilene Stone. Once asked to name the ten best female singers, the renowned musical producer Billy Rose replied, "There is Jane Froman and nine others." A legend in her time, Jane Froman (1907-1980) was one of Missouri's greatest success stories. Her singing career, which spanned over three decades, included radio and television, recordings, nightclub performances, Broadway shows, and Hollywood movies.

Jesse James and the Civil War in Missouri, by Robert L. Dyer. *Jesse James and the Civil War in Missouri* discusses the underlying causes of the Civil War as they relate to Missouri and reveals how the war helped create both the legend and the reality of Jesse James and his gang. Written in an accessible style, this valuable book will be welcomed by anyone with an interest in the Civil War, the legend of Jesse James, or Missouri history.

Missouri at Sea: Warships with Show-Me State Names, by Richard E. Schroeder. Although the state of Missouri is located hundreds of miles from the nearest ocean, ships with Missouri names and connections have served the United States for decades. In *Missouri at Sea*, Richard Schroeder tells about the ships that were named after the state, its cities, and its favorite sons and explores the important role that each has played in American history.

On Shaky Ground: The New Madrid Earthquakes of 1811-1812, by Norma Hayes Bagnall. Although most Americans associate earthquakes with California, the tremors that shook the Mississippi valley in southeast Missouri from December 16, 1811, through February 7, 1812, are among the most violent quakes ever to hit the North American continent in recorded history. Collectively known as the New Madrid earthquakes, these quakes affected more than 1 million square miles. By comparison, the 1906 San Francisco earthquake affected only 60,000 square miles, less than one-sixteenth the area of the New Madrid earthquakes. Informative, clearly written, and well illustrated, *On Shaky Ground* will be of interest to all general readers, especially those interested in earthquakes or Missouri history.

Orphan Trains to Missouri, by Michael D. Patrick and Evelyn Goodrich Trickle. Cheap fares, the central location of the state, and numerous small farming towns along the railroad tracks made Missouri the perfect hub for orphan trains, even though many areas of the state were still largely unsettled. Researchers have estimated that from 150,000 to 400,000 children were sent out on orphan trains, with perhaps as many as 100,000 being placed in Missouri. *Orphan Trains to Missouri* documents the history of the children on those Orphan Trains – their struggles, their successes, and their failures. Touching stories of volunteers who oversaw the placement of the orphans as well as stories of the orphans themselves make this a rich record of American and midwestern history.

The Osage in Missouri, by Kristie C. Wolferman. In this well-written and very readable work, Kristie C. Wolferman traces the history of the Osage Nation from its origins to its forced departure from Missouri. She demonstrates the ways in which the Osage culture changed with

each new encounter of the Osage with Europeans. *The Osage in Missouri* suggests that the white men could never understand the Osage way of life, nor the Osage the white men's way. But Osage culture, greatly altered by Europeans and Americans, would never be the same again. The Osage would be forced to sacrifice most of their traditions and beliefs, as well as their homeland, on the way to becoming "civilized."

Paris, Tightwad, and Peculiar: Missouri Place Names, by Margot Ford McMillen. Paris, Tightwad, Peculiar, Neosho, Gasconade, Hannibal, Diamond, Quarantine, Zif, and Zig. These are just a few of the names Margot Ford McMillen covers in her lively new book on the history of place names in Missouri. The origins behind the names range from humorous to descriptive: Anyone interested in Missouri's history and folklore will be fascinated by this well-researched book. Readers interested in collecting and documenting Missouri place names will appreciate McMillen's tips and information.

Quinine and Quarantine: Missouri Medicine through the Years, by Loren Humphrey. Presenting a fascinating overview of medicine in Missouri from the early days of epidemics to present-day technological advances, *Quinine and Quarantine* approaches the history of medicine as an integral part of the state's development. Organized chronologically in fifty-year segments and written in language free of jargon, *Quinine and Quarantine* offers readers a broad historical view of the medical problems and solutions faced by the people of Missouri, preparing them to cope with medical issues of the new millennium.

The Trail of Tears across Missouri, by Joan Gilbert. As settlers moved beyond the eastern seaboard during the early nineteenth century, the government forced thousands of American Indians from their ancestral lands. The Cherokees, the largest and most important tribe in the Southeast, fought exile with a combination of passive resistance and national publicity for their plight. Because they had successfully resisted the government's efforts to move them from their homeland, their removal was particularly brutal when it finally came. *The Trail of Tears across Missouri* is a moving account of the 1837-1838 removal of the Cherokees from the southeastern United States to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma).

Literacy-Ready @ Your Library

ALA's Office of Outreach and Literacy services (OLOS) has done some inquiry and study with adult learners about adult literacy efforts at libraries. They have developed the following list of elements that might make a library "literacy-ready" for adult students; that is, these are elements of a library that successfully develop literacy in its patrons. These are characteristics of a library that make it friendly for adult learners. Libraries can use items from this list to measure how friendly the local library is for adult learners. The list may also be used for ideas about increasing the "literacy readiness" of the library. OLOS suggests libraries go beyond library staff to evaluate the literacy readiness of the library; the perspectives of adult literacy professionals, volunteer tutors, and adult learners will be valuable.

This list was developed in a state where direct instruction for adult education is done directly from libraries, but many of the ideas are also helpful for the literacy support role more often taken by Missouri libraries. It should not be interpreted as a list of demands, but a list of ideas. Some of these elements can help a library be well-prepared to add direct literacy activities to its other offerings. If a library houses a literacy program or does consider direct instruction, the list will help librarians envision how a full literacy instruction program at the library might look.

Making Your Library Literacy-Ready: WHAT DOES LITERACY-READY LOOK LIKE @ YOUR LIBRARY?

- ❑ Library staff receives training about adult literacy, adult learners, and library literacy.
- ❑ The library has a book collection for adult learners, tutors, and teachers.
- ❑ The library also has a collection of video and audio instructional and educational materials.
- ❑ The library has resources and educational materials in native languages to support reading and literacy development of ESOL adults and their children.
- ❑ The library is "user-friendly." The library staff is cordial, willing to help, and takes the initiative to provide help and support.
- ❑ The library director supports the literacy program.
- ❑ The literacy program is integrated into the library.
- ❑ The library staff understands and is responsive to the "needs" of adult learners.
- ❑ The library has signage appropriate for adult learners and others.
- ❑ Literacy students interact regularly with library staff and patrons.

- ❑ The library has greeters at the door.
- ❑ The library finds an alternative to the word “literacy” when labeling its collections and programs.
- ❑ The library collaborates and networks with other literacy providers and social service agencies in the community.
- ❑ The library has the resources and technology to meet the needs of adult learners.
- ❑ The library has a literacy program with dedicated staff.
- ❑ The library has facilities to meet the needs of a literacy program.
- ❑ The library has a literacy department.
- ❑ The library has an outreach program that informs adult non and new readers (and other underserved populations) about the range of library services available at the main and branch libraries.
- ❑ The literacy program has visibility in the community.
- ❑ The library supports the literacy program with funding and fundraising activities.
- ❑ The library has a bookmobile to reach adult learners in rural and remote areas.
- ❑ The library literacy program offers direct small group instruction for adult learners.
- ❑ The literacy program staff is qualified and consistent.
- ❑ The library offers a mentorship program for adult learners.
- ❑ The library receives media support showcasing their literacy services and programs.
- ❑ The library has developed multiple ways for adult learners to locate the literacy program.
- ❑ The literacy program has an assessment plan measuring learner progress and library usage.
- ❑ The library has adult learners as spokespeople, mentors, tutors, and staff.

More information about this ALA dialog with adult learners and librarians is located at <http://www.ala.org/ala/olos/outreachresource/makingyourlibrary.htm>.

Web Sites Related To Adult Literacy Learning

<http://www.litwomen.org/welearn.html>

WE LEARN (Women Expanding / Literacy Education Action Resource Network) promotes women's literacy as a tool for education and transformation. Contains resources, bibliographies, and ideas about working with low-literate women.

<http://www.ala.org/ala/olos/olosliteracy/adultliteracy.htm>

The American Library Association's adult literacy Web page.

<http://www.nifl.gov/>

The National Institute for Literacy, which contains a wealth of information and links about literacy in the United States and also is home to the "Equipped for the Future" adult education initiative and involved with some ongoing research into the literacy acquisition process in adults.

<http://www.dclibrary.org/dclearns/learner/help.html>

Literacy help from the Washington, D.C. Public Library.

<http://www.worlded.org/us/health/docs/comp/>

Offers an annotated bibliography of print and Web-based health materials for use with limited-literacy adults.

<http://www.iiri.org/citizenship/>

Contains notes at an easy reading level for citizenship questions and civics, and a PowerPoint presentation at a low literacy level on the history of the United States.

<http://www.alri.org/>

The Adult Education Teacher's Annotated Webliography, with notes about dozens of adult literacy sites for both adults and children and links to research.

<http://ncsall.gse.harvard.edu/fob/index.htm>

Focus on Basics is a journal for adult educators. Issues are arranged around a theme, and a good resource for those who are interested in Adult Literacy as a field.

<http://www.proliteracy.org/about/index.asp>

Proliteracy Worldwide is the largest organization for volunteer-staffed adult literacy programs. Contains links to articles and a publishing house with potential material for adult new learners and/or an adult new readers' collection.

<http://www.literacynet.org/value/>

VALUE (Voice for Adult Literacy United for Education) is a national organization of adult learners in the United States. The Web site contains some links and material to support learners and develop pride in the courage it takes to be an adult learner.

<http://www.ncrtec.org/pd/cw/adultlit.htm>

Captured Wisdom™ on Adult Literacy is a collection of resources and projects for adult learners; some might be models for short-term adult literacy projects out of the library, others may interest adult education partners who would find library resources helpful in implementing them.

Links to Adult Literacy and Education Resources

List provided by ProLiteracy Worldwide

Adult Literacy & Technology Network: www.altn.org

American Association for Adult and Continuing Education: www.aaace.org

American Council on Education & GED Testing Service: <http://www.acenet.edu/>

American Library Association: www.ala.org/

Center for Applied Linguistics: www.cal.org

Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee: <http://cls.coe.utk.edu>

Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication: <http://reading.indiana.edu/>

Commission on Adult Basic Education, Inc. (COABE): www.coabe.org/

Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy: www.caalusa.org

Educator's Reference Desk: www.eduref.org/

Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy & Goodling Institute: www.ed.psu.edu/isal

International Reading Association: www.reading.org

Learning Disabilities of America, Inc.: www.ldanatl.org/

NALS Synthetic Estimates of Adult Literacy: www.casas.org/lit/litcode/

National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center: <http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu/>

National Alliance of Literacy Coalitions: <http://www.naulc.org/>

National Center for Family Literacy: <http://famlit.org/>

National Center for Nonprofit Boards: <http://www.boardsource.org/>

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning & Literacy: <http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~ncsall/>

National Center on Adult Literacy: <http://ncal.literacy.upenn.edu/> or <http://www.literacy.org/>

National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium: <http://www.naepdc.org/>

National Institute for Literacy: <http://novel.nifl.gov/>

National Institute for Literacy's LINC'S: www.nifl.gov/lincs/search/search.html

Pfizer's Partnership for Clear Health Communication: www.askme3.org/

SCALE Student Coalition for Action in Literacy Education: www.readwriteact.org

TESOL Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages: www.tesol.org

United Way of America: <http://national.unitedway.org/>

U.S. Department of Education: www.ed.gov/

U.S. Office of Vocational & Adult Education: www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/index.html

Verizon Literacy Campus: <http://www.vluonline.org/>

Voice for Adult Literacy United for Education (VALUE): <http://literacynet.org/value/>

World Education: www.worlded.org

A Conversation about Stopping Illiteracy at the Source

Questions and answers from Tom Sticht, International Consultant, Adult Education

Q: Why do we have all these adults who are practically illiterate? Why can't they read?

A: Because the high schools are graduating functional illiterates, and we need to fix the high schools so they stop sending functional illiterates out into the world.

Q: Why don't the high schools teach students to read before they graduate them?

A: It's too late. The middle schools keep sending the high schools students who can't read, and the high schools can't teach the academic subjects and teach students to read at the same time. We need to have the middle schools stop sending students to high school who can't read.

Q: Why don't middle schools teach students to read before they send them to high school?

A: It's too late. The primary grades keep sending on the middle schools students who can't read, so the middle schools can't teach the subjects to prepare the students for high school and also teach the kids to read. We need to have the primary schools stop sending students who can't read to middle school.

Q: Why don't the primary schools teach students to read before they send them on to middle school?

A: It's too late. Parents keep sending children to primary school who have not been prepared to learn to read at home. We need a preschool like Head Start to prepare children to learn to read, so parents can stop sending children to primary school who aren't ready to learn to read.

Q: Why do so many children have to go to Head Start to get prepared to learn to read? Why don't parents prepare them at home?

A: It's too late by age three or four. That's why we need Early Head Start, so children can be prepared starting at birth to go to Head Start, so they can learn to read in primary school, so they can learn pre-high school subjects in middle school, so they can learn high school subjects and graduate from high school, literate and contributing to society.

Q: Why are so many children born unprepared to be prepared to learn to read?

A: It's too late by birth. Too many young adults are functionally illiterate and unable to take care of themselves. Often they get involved with drugs or other activities that destroy their bodies and harm their minds. They often have many out of wedlock births, they are frequently unable to make informed choices about good prenatal and postnatal care, and they are unable to afford it because they can't qualify for well paying jobs.

What we need is a high quality, well-funded adult education and literacy system in the United States that will prepare adults for parenting and profitable work which will permit them to provide for their own and their children's health, and send their children to school prepared to learn to read, support them through primary, middle and high schools, and graduate them with the literacy skills they need to participate fully in society.

It is not too late. Adult literacy education contributes to the solution of both present and future problems of adult literacy.

Activity Notes

What libraries do for adult literacy in Missouri

A list of library literacy efforts, ideas, activities, and collaborations

Literacy efforts in Missouri's libraries are diverse, and they represent many kinds of service and literacy support. The ideas collected below come from libraries actively supporting adult literacy, even though they don't actually run teaching programs. The ideas collected below come from libraries in Missouri, some previously done; others are in process, and still others ideas being developed. They are collected here as a catalogue of ideas that any other library in Missouri might borrow to increase library literacy efforts. The best ideas often come from the trenches!

- Put a deposit collection or rotating collection of new reader materials in an AEL (Adult Education and Literacy) center or in the classroom used by a local literacy council.
- Libraries provide space for local literacy council students and tutors to meet.
- Libraries provide classroom space for literacy classes or ESOL classes.
- Adults from literacy classes, GED classes, a family literacy center, or a teen parent group visit the library on a regular basis. The schedule allows the library to plan for them, reserve computers, issue library cards, offer short courses or help sessions with topics such as getting tax forms off the Internet, walk participants through a pre-selected parenting Web site, etc.
- Libraries host or arrange programs in the community or in the library for both literacy groups and other community or civic groups; this not only educates but removes the distinction between literate and low-literate patrons.
- Some libraries make GED books available in spite of problems, at least on a reference shelf. Several places have persuaded a local business to provide these, since the rate of non-return is high.
- Libraries post flyers advertising GED classes in the video section or in other sections of the stacks that attract either people who may need classes or people who have connections with people who need literacy help.
- Some libraries put together special collections, such as a parenting collection or job seeker resources that unobtrusively include books at low reading levels.
- Consider selected juvenile works as alternatives for adult new or struggling readers.
- An idea for getting low-literacy patrons into a library is to let a literacy program or a social services agency issue a referral card or coupon to be presented at the library for a library card application and maybe a free book. The referral form or card could already have on it the information needed to fill out the application, and it will alert the desk staff to be helpful. It doesn't need to look like an educational referral, more like a coupon.

Adding the incentive of a free child's book, a free issue of a general-interest magazine, or other "freebie" helps a lot.

- Libraries find ways besides having uneasy staff members get library card applications from adults who may have trouble filling out forms. For example, parent educators have everyone fill out a library card application at a meeting, and follow up with a meeting in the library that includes a tour.
- At least one Missouri library uses appropriate "weeds" from the collection to put an offsite collection at a nursing home. The same concept would work at an adult education center, a shelter, or a waiting room. Since the books and magazines are "weeds," loss won't matter. Since the library checks on it and adds new materials once in a while the small collection won't become outdated, too shabby, or retain useless materials.
- Shelve a copy of a book that has been filmed beside the video or DVD of that film.
- Some libraries offer workshops for parents, such as "how to help with homework" or "how to survive your kid's science project." These have the secondary literacy agenda of getting literacy information to parents.
- Some programs supporting children's academic achievement include parent participation. One library partners with a local adult education center to offer short courses such as *Helping Your Kids with Division*, addressing skills parents also need but may not want to admit they need. At least one library periodically hosts a series of *Phonics for Parents* presentations.
- Programs for seniors may include computer literacy, large print books, taped books to nursing homes, and referrals to Wolfner Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.
- Parent educators can use a library for meetings, help families get cards, and learn to use the library in the process. One meeting might be a sample story hour that encourages parents to bring children back for the regular story hour.
- One Missouri library reports a partnership with Head Start that brings in 10 families (chosen by Head Start) for a one-evening program on reading with kids. Held once a year, the program also gives away free books and has been very successful.
- Some Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) classes visit the local library on a regular basis. This gets the students there and also gives the library a chance to prepare, reserve computers, etc.
- Children's librarians can come to parent education sessions or participate on planning teams as a resource person in family literacy or parent education programs. In some communities the children's librarian may be one of the most knowledgeable people available on the subject of children and reading.

Literacy services for adults who are also parents

Librarians have long known that serving children means serving their families. Often children are the reason adults seek literacy help and improvement. Although we don't refer to children as low-literate, they too are beginning the literacy process. Children are a reason to introduce parents to both reading support services and easy-reading books. Parenthood dignifies adults reading children's books at low reading levels.

These ideas for reaching low-literate parents by serving families have come from libraries, many of them from libraries in Missouri. Parent programs are generally done in partnership with some other effort or organization. In some communities the children's librarian is a primary resource person on books and children so becomes an important parent resource person.

Family Nights at the Library and other family programs invite families to the library at a certain time. One format starts the evening with a brief joint book reading, which builds enthusiasm for reading and demonstrates how to read to children. Then children and parents split up, and the parents listen to a speaker while the children have an activity related to the book. When possible every family goes home with a children's book.

Another frequent format for family nights is where the library or a partner agency plans an activity where children and parents participate together. Parents As Teachers (PAT), Practical Parenting Partnership (PPP), and community agencies are often looking for ideas and collaborations with other local entities.

Some libraries provide free help-your-child-read packets for parents, with suggestions for games and word lists; the material in these kits is at a low adult reading level.

One public library added book carts of material for adults to a school library, and the school libraries stayed open on certain evenings as a substitute for or adjunct to a branch public library. This expanded literacy support in the communities.

One library has book exchange racks in a local coffee shop and Laundromat. It includes children's books as well as adult titles.

A few libraries have done the "Read from the Start" program with the Missouri Humanities Council, or other national grant programs such as Prime Time or PBS Between the Lions; some have also adapted ALA's Born to Read or Dolly Parton's Imagination Library for their localities.

Some libraries participate in a project to give new parents a bag of infants' books and parenting materials; frequent partners are community betterment agencies, social services, or a hospital birthing center. A few libraries do it directly or help with the fundraiser for such a program. In addition, some libraries give new siblings children's books (they include one about having a new baby in the house), tote bags, and a few other goodies.

Placing short books at all reading levels in places where people have to wait – doctor's offices, social services offices, clinics, etc. – is a literacy effort.

Public libraries can have reading events for families or a group of siblings instead of individual children. (This is great for home schoolers!)

Libraries find many events where book give-aways or book prizes are appropriate: trick or treat at the library, community festivals, books in food-pantry Christmas boxes etc.

Books can be included in holiday food baskets given to families by another organization.

Traditional story times, lap-sits, and toddler times can be thought of as “how to do it” sessions for parents. Taking such programs to parents that don’t usually come to a library is a literacy outreach that may help children do well in school. Head Start, day care centers, teen mom programs, and social services offices may serve as possible sites.

One library is exploring having a scheduled story time for children in the WIC office during a time when parents must be there meeting with social workers. Some pediatrician’s offices are also choosing to support literacy and might be open to a literacy activity during a well baby clinic.

Ways a Library can Serve New Readers

1. Provide meeting space for tutoring, training, or other general literacy activities.
2. Give employees an orientation to sensitize them to the needs of non-readers; inform staff about literacy council activities.
3. Encourage employee involvement with a local literacy council.
4. Display flyers and posters and other publicity for local literacy activities.
5. Provide office space for literacy council.
6. Library cooperatives can provide delivery service to distribute literacy materials to libraries in the area, encouraging full use of these specialized materials.
7. Promote literacy activities to the Friends of the Library, if you have such a group.
8. Provide literacy collections for use by students, tutors, and agencies.
9. Keep catalogs from literacy publishers for reference.
10. Subscribe to *News for You*, a newspaper published for low-level readers by New Readers Press.
11. Invite all literacy tutors in the area to a coffee/discussion meeting with the library staff; suggest that all pupils be brought to the library for orientation and that tutors show their students how to phone the library for information.
12. Visit adult education and remedial reading classes on a regular basis to promote library materials and services.
13. Offer workshops on how to use the library for staff and students in adult basic education programs.
14. Place deposit collection in education centers and welfare and unemployment offices.
15. Order multiple copies of low-level materials so pupils and teachers can have copies.
16. Train staff to use a readability formula such as the Fry Readability Formula.
17. Take the director of your local literacy program to lunch and build a good working relationship.
18. Have names and addresses of local literacy organizations and individual tutors easily accessible for referrals by library staff.
19. Prepare a presentation for your library board to show the need to support local training efforts through literacy collections and other programs.
20. Write radio public service announcements about the availability of low level reading materials in the library; send them to radio stations, especially country, popular, religious, and minority stations in your area.
21. Sponsor or co-sponsor information sessions on life-coping skills such as filling out a job application.
22. Provide a deposit collection for your local prison or juvenile detention center.
23. Ask local clubs, church groups, organizations, and individuals to help support literacy efforts, financially if necessary.
24. Give story-telling workshops for personnel in Head Start and other pre-school programs.

From *Libraries and Literacy: A Literacy Handbook*, Library of Michigan. 4/87.

A91-SS05



Thoughts from a library literacy program in Illinois

Walking with adult learners

Research is showing that literacy projects need to provide multi-sensory, sequential, structured programs that serve native-born adult new readers. These individuals may not read and write well, often because they were not taught in a way that made sense to them.

The literacy program at Waukegan Public Library operates as a team, capitalizing on each person's strengths. One staff member is a writer, one is a speaker and one is an adult new reader who "walks" with the students. It takes all three to run an effective program.

About three years ago, a committee of adult literacy educators studied the topic of assessment. The committee invited the literacy program staff at the library to shift the paradigm of assessment to that of being "co-assessors" with the adult learners. When the staff shifted to the position of "co-assessor," they realized how much they needed to listen to the students. And listening over the years has brought the program to new places.

Adult learners are capable, responsible people. The processing of print often is their only limitation. Their ability to think, organize and lead often are well developed. What we need to do as volunteers and educators is support the students and walk with them, but as co-assessors we must not put ourselves into a position of power over them.

In order to better understand their needs and learn from their experiences, we must involve them in our practices — hire and train them as staff and take them to conferences.

Successful leadership in adult literacy is contingent on teams that include both adult learners and educators — teams that realize there is much to be learned from one another. The best practices will only develop when this is achieved. Learn more about the needs of adult learners at:

www.nifl.gov

The Equipped for the Future study, National Institute for Literacy, lists the core things that adult learners want, including a "voice" and "access."

www.literacynet.org/value

Voice of Adult Literacy United for Education is a national organization run by and for adult learners.

literacy.kent.edu/illinois/illearners.htm

"A Different Kind of Smart" is a video of an improvisational theater production that offers a glimpse of what it is like to be a new reader in a literate society.

(Carol Morris, literacy program, Waukegan Public Library, contributor)



More than 1,000 students and literacy program staff attended Legislative Awareness Day in Springfield in April, organized by the Illinois Adult and Continuing Educators Association. At the Secretary of State Literacy Office participants got to choose a book or magazine to take home, donated by the Literacy Office staff.

This is a sample of a library handbook at a low reading level produced by the Washington D.C. library. The original can be found at:

<http://www.dclibrary.org/dclearn/learner/help/mlk.html>

The MLK LIBRARY HANDBOOK

Why This Handbook?

This Handbook tells you about the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library. It tells about the books in each room of the library. It tells how to find information. It has a list of the addresses and phone numbers of the other libraries in D.C. It tells about interesting library programs.

If you have any questions about this Handbook or about the library, please call 202/727-1616 or come to Room 300 of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library.

How to Get to the Library

The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library is at the corner of 9th and G Streets NW. It is just one block from bus and Metro stops.

BY BUS

The “S” bus stops at 11th and G Streets. The “G6” bus stops at 9th and G Streets. The “42” bus stops at 9th and G Streets.

BY METRO

Take the Red or Yellow/Green Line Metro to the Gallery Place stop.

Use the 9th and G Streets exit.

Or take the Orange/Blue Line Metro to the Metro Center stop. Use the 11th and G Streets exit.

BY CAR

The library has an underground parking lot. It is free to park there. You must get on 10th Street. Then turn left on G Place to get to the garage.

Getting Your Library Card

You can get a free D.C. Public Library card if you live in:

D.C.

Montgomery or Prince George's County, Maryland

Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, or Prince William County, Virginia

Falls Church or Alexandria, Virginia

You must come to the library yourself to get the card, and you must bring something with you that has your name and address printed on it, such as:

a driver's license or other I.D.

a bill or letter mailed to you within the past two weeks

(If you are living in a shelter for the homeless, you must bring a letter from the shelter. Let the shelter know that the letter must be on what is called "letterhead stationery.")

And don't forget! Your children can also get library cards. But they must be able to print their name in order to get a card.

Layout: The First Floor

There are many rooms in the library. Each room has different kinds of books in it. Each room has a name that tells you what kinds of books you will find there.

Ask at the Book Information Service Desk where to find the books and materials you want. Here you can also find out about special displays, programs and meetings held on the "A" level of the Library.

Behind the Information Desk is a set of card files called the card catalog. The card catalog will soon be gone. There are now computers here that tell you what books are in the library. Ask for help in using the computers at the Information Desk.

At each side of the front door are two more desks. One is for checking out your books, and the other is for returning your books and getting a library card.

On one side of the 1st floor you will find the Popular Library, Young Adult Services, and the College Information Center. The Popular Library has stories, mysteries, romances and paperback books. Young Adult Services has books for young adults and computers they can use. The College Information Center has print and computerized information for anyone who needs to find out more about college education.

On the other side of the 1st floor is the Business and Technology room. Here is where you can find books on jobs and resumes and telephone books from other cities and states.

In front of Business and Technology is "Books Plus." In this store you can buy a sample GED Practice Test for \$8.00. The store also has books, cards, jewelry, and gifts for sale.

Layout: The Second Floor

Room 220 is for Sociology, Education and Philosophy.

Across the hall in Room 222 is the Adult Learning Center. Adult learners and tutors can meet here to study reading, writing, and math. Tutors should call the Literacy Resources Division to reserve space (202-727-1616).

Room 200 is the Children's Room, with books, records, and games. On the walls are pictures that children have drawn. If your children are at home and want to hear a story, they can call Dial-A-Story, 202-638-5717. They will hear a different story each week. This is a free call!

Across the hall from the Children's Room is the Audiovisual Room.

You can check out entertainment videos at the Library for \$2.00 a day or \$2.00 for the weekend. Educational videos and Books-On-Tape are free. You need your library card and I.D. to check out videos.

Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

Room 215 is the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. This room has books and tapes for people who are blind or need large print books. The Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped also sends out books to people who cannot get to the library. Also in Room 215 is the Coordinator of the Literacy for the Deaf Project. If you know a deaf or hard-of-hearing person who wants to study reading and writing with a tutor, visit Room 215 or call 202-727-2145.

Also in this room is the Lifelong Learning Center. This center has services for older adults.

In Rooms 207 and 209 are History and Biography (books about peoples' lives).

Layout: The Third Floor

Literacy Resources Division

On the 3rd floor in Room 300 is the Literacy Resources Division.

The Adult Basic Education Collection is in this room. You can find easy-to-read stories and books to help you learn reading, writing, and math, and study for the GED. There are also books to help speakers of other languages (ESL students) learn English.

In Room 300 you can also find out about many reading and writing schools and GED programs in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. You can also call (202) 727-2431 to find out about reading, writing, math and English as a Second Language classes.

CALICO-DC

CALICO-DC (Computer Assisted Literacy Center of DC) is also in Room 300. Adult learners and their teachers can use the computer software programs. There are reading, writing, spelling,

math, pre-GED and GED programs on the computers. Call 727-1616 to make an appointment to use the lab.

Periodical Room

Room 311 is the Periodical Room. This is where you find old issues of magazines.

Washingtoniana

Room 307 is Washingtoniana and the Washington Star Collection. You can look up things in old newspapers and learn about D.C. No materials can be checked out of Washingtoniana.

Black Studies Division

Room 316 is the Black Studies Division. Here you can learn about Black History in America and all over the world. No materials can be checked out of Black Studies.

There are rest rooms on this floor.

Layout: The Fourth Floor

On the 4th floor are the offices of the director and her staff, as well as work areas for the people who help keep the Library running.

Thanks!

These teachers and adult learners from Washington, D.C. worked hard to put this Handbook together:

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Janet Brown
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Monica O'Connell
Elaine Randall

Lottie Stevens
Hilda Warner
Paula Johnson Williams
Dorothy Williamson

An Alternate Idea For Serving Low-Literate Adults

The Free Library of Philadelphia gives adult new reader books to students in adult literacy programs who get a library card. Just as being surrounded by books helps children become literate, having books in the environment helps adults become literate. The plan of giving books to adult students has several library advantages. Loss, damage, and lack of circulation of these materials are not the library's problem. The strategy gets these unlikely patrons to come into the library and get library cards. It builds good feelings about the library and builds bridges for working with adult literacy instructors.

Once the library is a familiar and friendly, adult students may return to use the library in a more conventional fashion. Fortunately, most adult new reader materials are not expensive. It might be possible to persuade a business, foundation, or philanthropic individual to contribute funds for such a project.

Reproducible Information

GED Information on the Web

The official GED information page for the United States:

<http://www.acenet.edu/clll/ged/index.cfm>.

The GED page for Missouri residents who want to earn a GED:

http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/ged_index.htm.

Applications to take the GED test may be printed from:

http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/ged_application.htm.

The test cannot be taken online or at will. Applicants must go to an official testing center for a scheduled test session. They must apply and be approved in advance for the specific testing date and place. Instructions for students ready to take the test are at: http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/ged_take_the_test.htm.

In Missouri, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education offers an online tutorial for the GED that is free to any Missouri resident. At this writing the prospective student must go to an AEL class to take a placement test, register, and get a password, but after that the tutorial is free and may be accessed any time from any internet connected computer. Information is available at:

<http://www.gedonlineclass.com/>.

There is a list of Adult Education class sites offering free traditional classes to help students get a GED at: http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/ael_mo_program.htm.

Sample GED test questions can be found at

<http://www.acenet.edu/clll/ged/samples/index.cfm>. Sample GED materials are available at numerous commercial sites that sell GED preparation materials. Using “GED test” as a search term in a search engine will give you access to most of them.

Commercial self-study GED courses are available at bookstores and on the Web; the cost for these courses varies.



The Picture From The Numbers in 2004 Adult Low Literacy in Missouri

- ✓ The 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) reported that 17% of Missourians were at the lowest level of literacy. This 17% included non-native speakers of English.
- ✓ Census 2000 reported that 18.7% of adults over age 25 in Missouri lack a high school diploma or GED. The non-graduation rate in Missouri's public schools was 16%-19% in last five years, 16.1% in 2002.
- ✓ In 2003 MAP scores place 26.4% of our public school 11th graders below grade level ("step 1" or "progressing"), which suggests they are low-literate.

It is reasonable to say that 16%-19% of adult Missourians have literacy issues.

For the record:

- In FY-01, 49% of Missourians receiving public assistance lacked a high school diploma or GED. In 2002, 54% of incarcerated offenders in Missouri lacked a high school diploma or its equivalent. 2.7% of Missouri's population in 2000 was foreign born (an 80.8% increase over 1990), and about half of them reported speaking English less than well. Immigration of non-English speakers continues. It is not clear from numbers how many low-literate adult Missourians are non-native speakers of English and how many of them were born in the USA.
- The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) 2003 is in process; Missouri is in the sample.

Immigration: a numerical glimpse of Missouri

- ✓ In the 2000 census, foreign-born individuals represented 2.7% of Missouri's population. (This may be an undercount.)
- ✓ Half of them entered the United States since 1990, so about 1.5% of Missourians are fairly recent immigrants.
- ✓ 77% of foreign-born families speak a language other than English at home. At least a fourth of those report speaking English less than well.
- ✓ At least 2% of Missouri's total population call themselves Hispanic, whether native born or foreign born.
- ✓ Averages may not represent a given community.